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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 55 No. 9 April 26, 2023 suggested donation $1

STRIKE!

FIGHT FASCIST CUTBACKS & CAPITALIST WAR

NEWARK, NJ, April 12—For the first time in its 250-year history, a coalition of Rutgers workers—9,000 graduate workers, adjuncts, and part-time lecturers (PTL)— called a strike on what would have been communist Paul Robeson's 125th birthday.

On day one of the strike, members of the Progressive Labor Party were out in full force distributing CHALLENGE newspapers as picketers rallied and gave passionate speeches at the Newark campus. Together, workers and students shut down the $5 billion/year university across several campuses!

As the contradictions of capitalism bring the bosses' global system closer to World War III, such strikes and other forms of class struggle will intensify. Strikes have the potential to be schools for communism, and leading the struggles with revolutionary ideas builds the confidence of workers in choosing our class over the bosses' system forever.

Workers ready to fight, bosses & their misleaders cower

Workers' rage and lack of confidence in liberal misleadership and electoral politics is key to producing and maintaining strikes in an environment of growing fascism and war. Thousands of ordinary workers at Rutgers University chose the power of our class over the deadly defeatism of the liberal union bosses and the empty promises of NJ Governor Phil Murphy to fight for our needs. Getting closer to the strike launch, union misleaders tried to fool workers that it was in our best interest to believe that the threat of a strike is more powerful than its actual realization. Their lack of confidence in the working class, opportunism and pacifism - which no union boss or elected official can avoid - had them trying to convince rank and file members that they weren't "ready" to fight for each other. These misleaders were very wrong. When members were told that Murphy was requesting the union give him a short period of time to resolve the differences between Rutgers bosses and workers to avoid the strike, workers responded with a roaring no! PLP members worked with their union siblings to ensure the membership was ready, and that workers' need for a strike won over liberal misleaders' doubt and fear.

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $1. One Year: $20. Six months: $15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, April 26, 2023•Volume 55 No. 9

Editorial

Workers' rebellion in France

Coup the profit system with communist revolution

As Emmanuel Macron, the president of France and a shameless stooge for finance capital, tries to ram through a plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64, millions of workers are waging the largest mass fightback in that country in more than fifty years. Enraged by former investment banker Macron's anti-worker reforms, garbage collectors, utility workers, train conductors, and museum workers have walked off their jobs in droves.

Worldwide capitalism--and the charade of liberal democracy that gloves its iron fist—is in crisis. As the global economy plunges into recession and inter-imperialist rivalries intensify, the ruling class has no choice but to claw back wages and benefits from workers—and to use state terror and their mad dog racist kkkops against the inevitable rebellions. Wherever we see workers willing to withhold their labor and militantly reject the rulers' agenda for fascism and war, it's a good sign for our class. It points to our potential to build an international communist Progressive Labor Party, and to a future without bosses or exploitation.

Capitalist bosses protect banks, not workers

"The social state and the social safety net is disappearing," said Francoise, a social worker (The Guardian, 03/23). Three months shy of retiring at 63, she has joined the fightback in Paris. Workers and students are taking to the streets to light garbage on fire and damage bus stops, newspaper kiosks, and traffic lights. They firebombed Macron's favorite restaurant and stormed the Paris office of BlackRock, the multinational investment giant (Washington Post, 4/6).

For now, France's trade unions are vowing to stay on strike until Macron withdraws the retirement reform (AP, 4/10). But we know how sell-out union leaders use working-class anger to get a few crumbs of temporary concessions from the bosses—and then to pacify their members and get them off the streets. In 2017, a number of French unions backed Macron for his first term as president, despite his pro-business platform, when he faced off against open racist Marine Le Pen (New York Times, 5/1/17). Many leading French liberals did the same. Liberals are the main danger! The only long-term win for workers is the revolutionary fight for a communist world run by and for the international working class. While this process will be violent, it must be led with discipline and strategy. Smashing property isn't enough. Workers need to drive out the bosses and smash the whole capitalist system.

French rulers mobilizing for war

For the French bosses to get a seat at the table with the top imperialist powers, they must ramp up their attacks on workers. Even as Macron pushes to cut French workers' pensions, France is increasing its military budget by more than one third by 2030, to 400 billion euros. As Macron told the French military, "We must be ready for more brutal and numerous wars" (Wall Street Journal, 1/20). In line with Macron's pension reform, France plans to increase the age limit for army reservists to 70 and in some cases to 72 (msn.com, 4/4).

Amid the sharpening rivalry between the U.S. and China, France cannot be taken for granted. On a recent visit to China to meet with President Xi Jinping and seal a $15 billion trade deal, Macron made clear that the French ruling class won't be in lockstep with the U.S. bosses. As the New York Times noted, Macron "staked out an independent European position, and both leaders repeatedly lauded a 'multipolar world,' thinly disguised code for one that is not American dominated" (4/8). History shows us that any alliance between bosses is temporary, and that they won't hesitate to attack one another to protect their profits.

At his inauguration last June, Macron called for a "war economy" (Le Monde, 6/14/22). The bosses are telling us loud and clear that they are preparing for world war. It's the job of the working class, with communist leadership, to turn inter-imperialist war into worldwide communist revolution.

Lesser evils rob workers of revolutionary power

Workers in France have a long history of mass militant fightback. In 1789, the French Revolution overthrew the parasitic monarchy and inspired rebellions against slavery in Haiti and other French colonies in the Caribbean and Africa. In 1871, the Paris Commune marked the first attempt by workers to put communist ideas into practice and provided lessons to future communists on how to win. In the 20th century, French communists and anti-fascists fought vigorously and contributed mightily to the defeat of the Nazis.

But during World War Two, the French Communist Party (PCF) adopted the "Popular Front" line of the international communist movement. By calling for collaboration with "good capitalists" in the U.S., Britain, and France, this robbed the international working class of its revolutionary potential. Our class has suffered from "lesser evil" politics ever since. In 1968, when students and workers in France waged a violent struggle against the capitalist state, culminating in a wildcat general strike of 11 million workers, the PCF betrayed them. Just last year, these fake leftists showed their true colors when they backed the finance capitalist Macron for his second-term run-off against Le Pen.

Voting for liberal or fake-left misleaders--whether Macron in France, Biden in the U.S., AMLO in Mexico, Petro in Colombia, or Lula in Brazil--is a deadly trap. Our class deserves a world where older workers are treated with respect and gratitude for their decades of contributions to society. We deserve a world where imperialist war is ancient history, and where workers' needs come first. In short, we deserve a communist world. Let's fight for it!✪

LA: strike exposes edu bosses

LOS ANGELES, March 23—When students are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!" This chant rang out on busy Los Angeles streets as workers from two unions, Services Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 99 and United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), parents, students, and members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) marched in solidarity. Literally hundreds of cars driving by honked in support. For the better part of a week, workers all over LA got to witness the power of a united working class; a working class that must one day overthrow the capitalists and rule the world.

Members of SEIU Local 99, composed of cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, and school support staff, called a three-day action to strike against unfair labor practices and retaliatory action by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) school bosses. UTLA took to the picket lines in solidarity. Both unions have been in contract negotiations for over a year. Meanwhile, Los Angeles public school students are suffering from the chronic, racist understaffing of Special Education Assistants and other positions.

The pouring rain, which continued for most of this three-day strike, did not dampen the strikers' enthusiasm. At one school, PLP members were welcomed on the picket line and helped lead chants. We brought a back issue of CHALLENGE headlined "Strike" which got the attention of many passing drivers, creating a cacophony of noise. Picket lines of close to a hundred strikers from both unions in front of the school continued for hours in the morning before school workers traveled to downtown LA for afternoon mass rallies.

Money for schools, not for cops

While these education workers have been fighting for crumbs, the military and police always have funds. Biden, with full Congressional support, has dispersed more than $75 billion over the last year to the war in Ukraine. Even after a huge antiracist movement demanding to defund the police, the Democratic mayor and city council of LA increased LAPD's budget by $87 million. Karen Bass, LA's new mayor, has already promised to hire more KKKops and increase their funding. This is because capitalism is not designed to benefit workers, but rather funds only what will continue to keep the ruling class rich and powerful. The racist and sexist nature of capitalism is also very clear as working-class Black, Latin, and immigrant neighborhoods take the brunt of the cutbacks.

Thankfully, Local 99 workers have realized that their strength lies in withholding their labor power through striking. This comes on the heels of an uptick of workers striking internationally, most recently seen here in the six-week strike by the graduate students in the University of California system. Except for working-class revolution or mass rebellion, strikes, more than anything else, bring fear into the hearts of the bosses.

This is why we approached this opportunity with urgency. We joined picket lines at the schools we have connections to and attended the larger marches with our literature. A hundred PLP flyers analyzing the strike, and 70 copies of CHALLENGE were distributed. We talked with education workers about standing united and firm in this battle. This is one of the few ways we can force the bosses to give students, their families, and neighborhoods a fraction of the education they deserve. But more importantly, it will be vital for workers, teachers, students, and parents to ultimately learn that any reform or crumbs given can be taken away, so long as capitalism and its drive for maximum profit remains. This conversation led to May Day invitations as well.

Liberal leaders & politicians: no friends to workers

Another common conversation we had with workers is how liberals are the main danger to our class. UTLA leadership has put its faith in so-called progressive candidates to bring about change. They backed Karen Bass and a whole host of city council people and school board members in the last election, most of whom have been silent while Local 99 and UTLA members battled with LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho over the School Board's $5 billion surplus.

Karen Bass in particular ran on a platform spotlighting the issue of unhoused folks in LA. Yet, before the strike, she was silent as Local 99 workers' average salary remained below the poverty line and they were constantly under threat of losing their housing. She only inserted herself into the negotiations after it became clear the schools would be shut down because of the strike, and only then to pose as a "friend of labor," get credit for ending the strike, and preparing to mislead workers in the future. She will no doubt expect the union leadership to continue to support her going forward.

Strikes can be schools for communism

We cannot rely on liberals and so-called progressives to save us! Capitalism will always exploit its workers, but we can choose to organize to overthrow this system and replace it with communism where workers run society.

While striking is a crucial step in fighting for reforms and it makes clear the power of a united working class, it will never be enough to end racist and sexist attacks such as those on low-paid education workers. For that, we need a communist organization like PLP which is fighting to get rid of capitalism, the system that relies on unemployment, low wages, and part-time labor to maximize profit. In LA, we will strengthen the ties that we made on the picket lines and fight for this uptick in class struggle to lead to growth in PLP.✪

Spring Break Project for May Day brings red blossoms!

NEW YORK, NY, April 10—For several days, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and friends in New York City and Newark, New Jersey held events to prepare for May Day and build our confidence in the working class. We united students, workers, and retirees in anticipation of the most important day on the international working class's calendar: May Day! Several newer members gave leadership to the spring break project, which included a film screening, a fundraising dinner, banner/sign making, and discussions—all to build our communist movement.

In part because of these events, one student rekindled their connection to PLP and joined, and two workers are considering joining. Ours is a movement that is dedicated to smashing capitalism along with the racist terror and imperialist war the system creates.

Fighting racism from the screen to the streets

One of our first events of the week was a film screening that sparked discussion about our internationalist and antiracist political line. It was chosen by a newer member who also led the post-movie discussion. The film, *La Haine*, was about a group of French working class youth who were tired of the rotten system that had failed them and the racist police who brutalize them. While the young men in the film are full of contradictions (such as the racist, sexist, and reformist ideas they've been taught), their lived experiences as part of the working class eventually turns them all against the racist police.

In our discussion afterward, several people pointed out that a Black youth in the film advocated nonviolence and passivity but this ultimately led to his friend being killed by police. On the other hand, another youth argued for individualist violence that, as his friends pointed out, wouldn't change the nature of society by ending police terror for everyone. We took yet another stance: We need revolutionary violence, not individual adventurism, in order to change the situation. One friend of PLP asked "How do we get everyone on the same page?" We must put revolutionary ideas and practice at the forefront of class struggle while exposing the many types of misleaders that capitalism produces. Only by fighting for communism can we finally end police terror.

The following day, we had a May Day organizing meeting, CHALLENGE newspaper sale, and fundraising dinner. At the meeting, a new member led the discussion, and she encouraged all friends and members to contribute based upon their commitment. Newer comrades prepared speeches about fighting back against racist attacks and experiences that led them to join PLP.

Dinner & door-to-door organizing bring communist ideas forward

The fundraising dinner that night was definitely a highlight of the May Day preparations. Over 70 new and veteran comrades met to bolster enthusiasm for our big day. The responsibility for hosting was shared in a collective way. We sang songs dedicated to the international working class and our fight for communism. Workers of all ages contributed food, decorations, words, activities (to be auctioned), and funds to ensure our march on May Day would be a success. One comrade spoke about the history of May Day going back to the 1886 Haymarket "Riot" when workers fought for the 8-hour workday - noting that we carry on that struggle today.

The next day, we went door-to-door in Newark housing projects to do our third CHALLENGE sale of the spring break project. Our ongoing involvement in struggles against the racist police, landlords, and politicians in New Jersey and around the world were at the forefront of our conversations with workers about why they should march with us on May Day. Between this event and two sales we had along our May Day march route in Brooklyn, we distributed around 400 papers as part of the spring break project.

After the sale, we held a banner-making event that highlighted the intergenerational character of our organization. Comrades took time to paint the banner and signs, share a meal, and take turns in childcare.

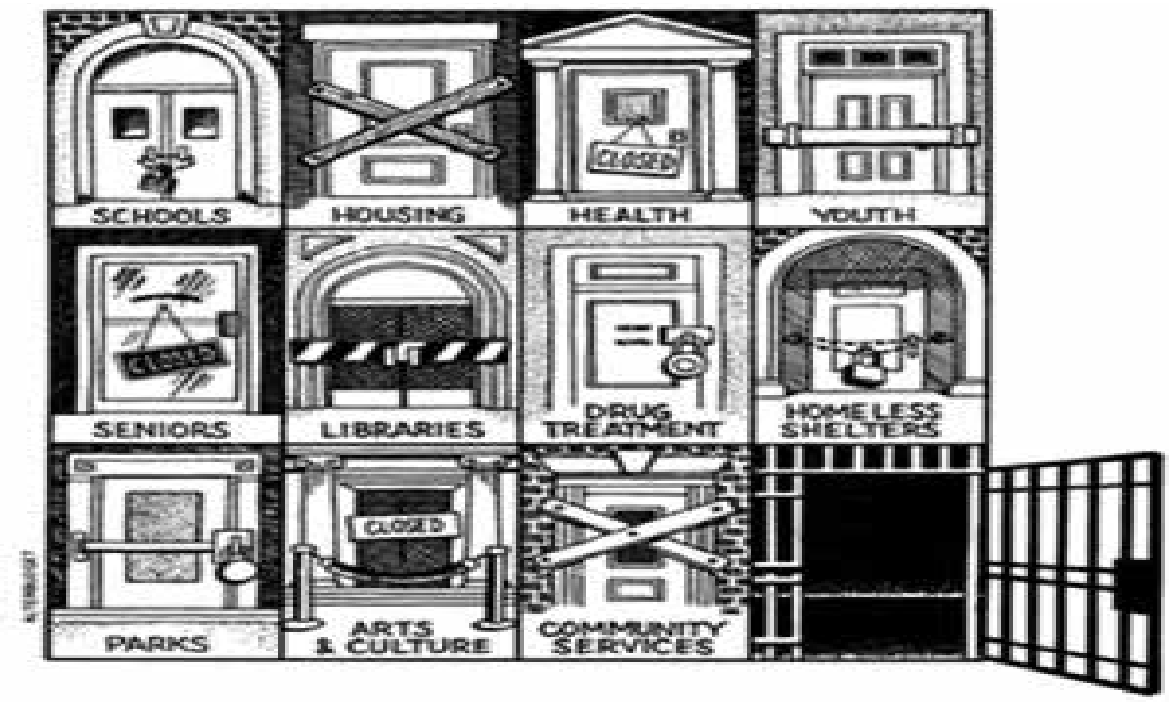
Wrapping up with discussion on fascism

On the final day of our pre-May Day events we held a study group on fascism, or a stage of capitalism when the bosses struggle to maintain their power under the facade of liberal democracy. During our discussion, we deepened our understanding of what fascism is and how we can build our communist movement as it develops. One comrade shared their recent experiences in a high school, where a principal has used scare tactics and bribery to pacify students from fighting back against the administration's racist response to the murder of a former student after he was pushed out of the school. We discussed the idea of having a citywide campaign to reject school push-outs and to fight the bosses' lie that students are expendable.

Afterwards we took time to write submissions for our newspaper CHALLENGE - since it is a paper that is written collectively by members and friends of the PLP (see letters on page 6). Throughout the project, we socialized and connected based on our shared goal on the long road to a communist future.

In a period of increasing imperialist conflict between the U.S., Russia, and China, our hard work towards building a revolutionary communist movement is more important than ever. While the bosses have nothing to offer our class but death and destruction, we stand prepared to build a society determined to meet the needs of all members of the working class around the world. Join us and march with us on May Day!✪

We won't let racist gangsters for capitalism bury our kids.



BROOKLYN, NY, April 12—After a 17-year-old former student Claude* was killed in the streets, it forced the working class—students and teachers—of a small school to choose: fightback or passivity. While the final verdict is still out, the struggle has become a test for pro-communist ideas in the face of liberal fascism.

School, union, city: all gangsters for capitalism

The racist Black principal has been able to get away with blood on her hands (see boxed letter). When Progressive Labor Party says liberal fascism is the greater danger for the working class, this is what we mean.

This principal—in a liberal city run by a Black mayor Eric Adams—has successfully created an environment where students and education workers feel pressured to "lay low" and accept the expendability of Black youth as "normal." This is one way the school stays one of "America's Best High Schools" in the U.S. News and World Report.

To stay on top, the Black leadership throws out Black students like they're trash.

But, it's not just her. The UFT District Representative—the educator workers' union that prides itself on putting the needs of students on the back burner—was silent when one teacher had said, "The union needs to make a fight against these racist pushouts."

This is the same district rep who spent what felt like hours detailing his diligence in keeping his teacher file up to date.

While this seems small, it's a reflection of the limits of unions. The UFT leadership cynically puts electoral politics and teacher salaries over students' learning conditions. This was no surprise considering the racist strike of 1968, when the UFT walked out as a response to the efforts of Black parents to exert community control over schools in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Ocean Hill-Brownsville. A union that sacrifices Black and Brown students is a racist one.

One tenet of fascism (an old capitalist system in crisis headed for world war) is the idea of accepting expendability.

As the future of capitalism becomes more uncertain (see editorial, page 2), the bosses need a tighter control of their class and the working class. Capitalist schools train us to treat our class as disposable—to accept that some youth will just be homeless, unemployed, jailed, killed in war, erased. The ones who can make this fascist argument most convincingly are the ones who present themselves as pro-worker.

This is the same type of idea that threw workers into gas chambers.

We will always remember him

How do you respond when a Black principal makes it taboo to discuss and honor a victim of capitalism and pressures a mainly-white-teacher force and a mainly-Black-student force to simmer down?

Several teachers have stepped up in the reform struggle—one organized a card and funds for the family, another made photos of Claude, another printed the poem "Kids who Die," and yet another helped blow up balloons for the third memorial wall. Every teacher also received a laminated tag, "we will always remember [Claude]."

Several have now made a small memorial with all these items inside their classrooms. Some have also folded Claude into their lesson plans.

Some teachers and students wore a button on their shirts or bags. It was made using printed text, clear packing tape, and a safety pin.

However, through one-on-one conversations, approved personal days, bending of some dress codes for "good kids," and awarding field trips to previously banned students, the administration has pacified many staff and students.

One described the niceness as "the calm before the storm."

The working class is not dumb. We understand the administration was threatened by the show of worker-student unity. And it will be our unity that the administration will come after. They will pit "good" students against struggling students, new teachers against tenured teachers.

This divide-and-conquer strategy will be no match for a politically conscious working class. That's why linking this fight to capitalism and war is key. CHALLENGE readership has grown tremendously compared to its meager distribution before Claude, and building relationships with co-workers and students is needed more than ever. We need to win the masses to see the fight for communism as the only answer deserving of Claude's memory. Communism means we serve ALL kids. No child is expendable.

Kids over capitalism

If Claude weren't pushed out, would he have been alive to walk on graduation day in three months? An administration that cares more about data and awards than a Black child has got to go. Claude's killing has exposed a criminal policy that we need to fight.

Claude was not a number. He was a member of the working class, and he deserved better. A system that treats certain students as expendable DOES NOT deserve to exist. For our students, shut this racist system down. ✪

**The pseudonym Claude is inspired by the communist fighter and writer, Claude Mckay.*

Fight to stop student pushout!

The following letter is written by a new teacher who became involved in the fight for Claude and against student pushouts.

As a person new to teaching and new to Brooklyn, the treatment of the legacy of a former student who was fatally shot near the school where I teach opened my eyes to not only how the school to prison pipeline functions, but to how treatment of working class students in a capitalist system kills.

When Claude was killed, the school that I work for not only did nothing to memorialize their former student, but fought hard against students and teachers who wanted to memorialize him themselves. Students created a memorial for Claude that was hung in the hallway. It was taken down by administrators the next day. When they hung it back up it was taken down almost immediately. Students overheard their principal admonishing Claude to other students and teachers, using racist rhetoric and accusing him of being in a gang in order to justify erasing his memory from the school after his death. The principal even antagonized teachers who took a personal day to attend their former student's funeral.

This strange response can be explained by the fact that Claude was pushed out of our school. Our school boasts a 95 percent graduation rate which is very rare for our district, and one way that they achieve this is by pushing out students who threaten this misleading statistic. Student pushout is incredibly common in New York City, and this event has opened my eyes to how it unfolds in real time. Students are suspended with little reason, harassed by administrators, and working class parents are consistently asked to leave their jobs to attend disciplinary meetings at the school. Since forcing students to leave is illegal, employees of the Department of Education instead harass and bully children and parents until they decide that it is best to leave. Often administrators will convince parents that their students' needs would simply "be better met at another school."

But this is not the truth.

Suspensions and pushouts follow students, making it difficult to keep up with classwork, maintain good grades, and apply to college. It is already widely understood that suspensions, which are a critical aspect of the pushout process, are damaging to students and greatly increase their likelihood of being incarcerated. In a racist school system these practices disproportionately affect Black and Brown students. So why do schools continue this practice?

Capitalism forces schools to compete with each other for scarce funding, resources, and even for students. Graduation rates and test scores are important to school bosses, and one way to keep high scores with limited resources is to get rid of students who threaten their scores. Instead of viewing students as fully formed humans, they are viewed as pawns to be traded, bargained for, and cast off. But schools don't have to be this way!

Teachers should understand that this system not only harms students, but harms us as well. When we treat students like numbers, like problems, and pawns, we create a hostile environment that affects our lives too. We watch students that we care for be harassed, excluded from our classrooms, and disappeared from our schools without our consent. Teachers need to understand that this is a problem that is worth fighting about. Together, with parents and students we can fight for schools that care for all students, not just students who are willing to follow the status quo.

Parents, teachers, and students unite to end this violent, racist practice. Unite to end capitalism!

To be a communist is to fight for our class

The history of the communist movement is fighting for the working class. The communist movement was born out of the struggle for a better world. It was born out of the fight by the working class to resist their exploitation and demand equality. As the communist movement grew the capitalist ruling class quickly realized the existential threat posed by a conscious working class.

As long as the working class has fought for a better world the ruling class has attacked the movement. It's hard to be attacked. The bosses attack us to scare us and our class and stop us from fighting back. Their goal is to demoralize the working class so it doesn't see its own power as a class to get rid of capitalism.

We have learned that the best way to respond to attacks by the bosses is to fight back. In Progressive Labor Party's (PLP) history there have been many struggles, many attacks, often firings and sometimes harsher consequences. All these battles are part of the struggle for the working class to gain confidence in itself, to see its power and learn that we don't need the bosses or capitalism.

In this article we'll look at two places where teachers and students were fighting back under the leadership of PLP, the teacher's union in Oaxaca and Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn.

Fighting back in Oaxaca

This May Day will mark 43 years of intense struggle by teachers in Oaxaca. PLP has been active in this struggle for all those years, fighting for the needs of students and parents to get a decent education and to build a communist movement that fights for a world where all students are educated. In response there have been intense attacks by the bosses against the teachers, in the 1980's, and around 2000, 2006, 2013 and 2015. Some of these attacks have been very severe including dismissals, imprisonments and even murders.

In each of these periods we've responded by going on strike, setting up barricades and building alliances with other groups of workers. There are 80,000 teachers in Oaxaca. During some of the struggles we've mobilized as many as 60,000 people, including workers from other sectors. One of our strongest responses was in 2002 when after a very militant fightback we brought about 1000 people to march on May Day under PLP's leadership.

PLP has spread our line among the masses. Many people in Oaxaca know CHALLENGE. In the teachers union leaders' assemblies we have promoted the class struggle, we have distributed flyers denouncing the policies of the government and we have attacked imperialism. PLP is developing a Party that is a true alternative leadership to the bosses rotten liberal democracy. Our advances are still small and slow and attacks continue. We have led very militant fights against reformist ideology, though political progress is still slow in this area.

Throughout these years of struggle we've always tried to build a base for communist ideas and now many people know the Party. We've lost members because the bosses have cut the number of teachers and others have retired, but we are still fighting. We have made progress in building a new younger leadership for our work in the union which bodes well for the future. We also know that while building a base for communism we've also fought off even more dismissals and jailings which has helped preserve and grow our base and keeps us in the fight.

Teachers, students and parents fight back in Brooklyn

Our teachers' collective at Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn came under attack by the administration after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in August of 2005. PLP organized people to go to New Orleans and help Black workers there who had been left to fend for themselves by the bosses' system.

A racist, careerist assistant principal hated that communists were organizing people to go to New Orleans and building PLP while helping Black workers abandoned by the ruling class after the hurricane. He reported us for taking students on an "unauthorized trip" even though students had permission slips from their parents.

One parent wrote a glowing letter supporting our efforts. "As a parent…I give my full support to this hard working team… I wish to commend the teachers, parents and students for their commitment to their goals and holding strong to their beliefs…" The lesson here is to be bold. Working class students and parents will support you.

Another attack occurred in the fall of 2010 when teachers and students fought racism together. As a student was entering school through security and the metal detectors a copy of CHALLENGE was found in the student's possession. The administrator wanted to know how and where the student got the paper- and learned that students and teachers had been to a rally in D.C. against racism with PLP members.

This racist principal had been after the PL'ers for years. As the principal was harassing both students and parents trying to get information about the trip, we organized a walkout and rally outside the school with hundreds of students. All the parents said that their young people had their complete permission and some brought them to the busses early in the morning. Now 18 years later we are still in touch with some of the parents, and students who went with us to New Orleans and also those that protested in D.C. Some are leaders of the Party today. We got Unsatisfactory ratings for that school year and they were well earned! But all of us who were involved in these struggles emerged stronger with more confidence in the working class and our ideas.

Fight to Win

These days the working class is often on the defensive more than going on the offensive against the bosses. When the demonstrations against racism, against the bosses' imperialist wars and for workers power and communist revolution are relatively small it can be difficult when the bosses attack but the lesson is the same.

The small battles will lead to bigger ones and the small victories of the communist movement growing out of the struggle are where the big victory of communist revolution is born. Whether it is a big struggle or small, our class can only win when we fight.

When the bosses attack, we have to fight back. That is what communists do. ✪

New Chicago mayor

Brandon Johnson, latest liberal fascist

As communists we know that billionaire capitalists run things in our world and in the city of Chicago. The recent election of Brandon Johnson for Chicago's mayor won't change that. The election was seen as a win for progressives and antiracists by many (Johnson is Black and his opponent white). Antiracist, working class wins don't happen through elections—they are the result of protests, strikes, and ultimately, communist revolution.

Brandon Johnson defeated Paul Vallas, a former head of Chicago Public Schools. Vallas worked to privatize public schools in Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Bridgeport, Connecticut after leaving Chicago. More recently he spent time serving U.S. imperialism in Chile and in Haiti. His school policies are in line with those in the ruling class (be they Democrats or Republicans) who promote charters and school vouchers to replace public schools. Johnson's policies are in line with those capitalists who support public schools as the best way to prepare working class youth to be future workers and soldiers. Only communist revolution will create spaces that truly educate all.

Johnson was backed by Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, the Chicago Teachers Union, and many other politicians and unions who are considered progressive. The outlook of their movement is that through elections and protests, the working class can diminish racism and improve education, health care, housing, and working conditions. Progressive Labor Party's analysis is based on history and science, which indicates that U.S. capitalism is in an economic crisis. Until the capitalists are defeated with communist revolution, racist attacks will continue, and the rich will take back any gains we make as soon as they can. Under capitalism, inter-imperialist wars as well as wars against the world's working class, will continue.

While open racists like Trump and Vallas appear to be our main capitalist enemies, liberals are actually the main danger. Whether they are well-intentioned and naive, or manipulative and brutal, liberal politicians, including Johnson, serve the capitalist class. As the capitalist system falls deeper into crisis and chaos, Johnson too will have to make budget cuts and ignore or crush dissent when it inevitably arises. Capitalism is a brutal system regardless of the face serving it, and there is no election that can change that.

Johnson and most of his supporters believe that his election will improve conditions for Chicago's workers. Chicago has about equal shares of Latin, Black, and white residents, and also contains a growing Asian population. In general, Chicago's white population is much wealthier than the other populations. Johnson has pledged to prioritize housing, education, and public safety. At the same time, he calls for a city that "respects the workers who keep it running and supports the entrepreneurs who keep it growing" (from his acceptance speech). This is an irreconcilable contradiction: the rich got that way because of their exploitation of the workers!

Crime was an important issue in the campaign. Johnson pointed out that many calls to police would be better handled by social workers and talked about the relationship of poverty to crime. However, he backed off previous support for "defunding police", even though 40 percent of the city's budget is spent on policing and Chicago has twice as many police per capita as the typical U. S. city. Under capitalism, police always "serve and protect" the rich— we won't need them under communism.

Some members of PLP were active in the Johnson campaign even though we don't agree that this racist, capitalist system can be changed through electoral politics. We join reform movements so that we can build relationships with workers who may later join our fight for communism. This election campaign is over, but the struggle continues, and we will invite many of those we worked with in the campaign to our upcoming May Day march.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

'When bosses cut back, we say fight back!'

On April 11, although New York City Mayor Adams and his friends, the leaders of the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC), finalized their agreement to privatize retiree health coverage, retired city workers continue to fight back. On March 31st and again on April 11th demonstrations were held in front of City Hall. Hundreds rallied on March 31 and over a thousand rallied today. A loud chorus responded to a speaker's call, "Bosses say cut back, we say fight back". In the midst of this struggle we are getting out CHALLENGE newspaper to our friends and inviting them to our Progressive Labor Party study group. We are learning from these older workers that you can't retire from the class struggle and in turn are teaching them how this racist capitalist system works.

As CHALLENGE has pointed out, the bosses throughout the U.S. are shifting health care costs onto the backs of workers. This is because they are preparing for war with their capitalist rivals in China and Russia and need to build their war chests. Union leaders are playing the role of willing accomplice as they "save" money for the bosses. Older workers face greater hardships when health care is denied, delayed or made too expensive for them to afford.

As this struggle plays out in street demonstrations, court suits, proposed legislation and union meetings, we will have ample opportunity to point out how the capitalist state apparatus and its agents in the mass organizations are used to keep workers, old and young, under the oppressive heel of the ruling class. Our involvement in all aspects of this struggle allows us to build schools for communism among workers fighting back.

★★★★★

It takes a village to make a banner

We had a victorious banner-making this afternoon where comrades as well as folks not yet in the Party--children as well as someone over 80—traveled miles to participate. The surprising aspect to me was not only the beauty of the many finished products but how the banners were perfected. The main banner, huge at about 4 feet by 10 feet, was sketched in advance by a practiced graphic artist who could not attend. It took a literal army of most of us participants to color in the red silhouetted army of marching workers and the illustrating words. Later, some smaller, poster-board sized creations revealed true communist principles in the making.

During poster making, a worker for a "non profit" agency educated a group of three children who were arguing over who should color in the words at the top of a poster board. The adult worker simply suggested turning around the poster itself so that no one need reach over the others and thus avoided a squabble.

Finally, on this very day in an email there appeared a summary from an article discussing the errors and lessons from the Soviet and Chinese Revolutions. Specifically, the Cultural Revolution brought out how "Struggle over capitalist versus working-class ideas is best when it fuses theory and practice. The theoretical side (the ideas in our banners) is conscious understanding of class relations. The practical side is how they operate in the village, the work unit, etc. The struggle is not over ideology by itself; it is about how we run things, overall (i.e., how the banners were produced)."

★★★★★

'my first communist dinner'

Growing up here in America, I always thought I knew what communism was and what a communist looked like. Communism was something that was the work of the devil himself and anyone who dared call themselves a communist was a traitor to all that was right and good in the world and that they should be turned into the C.I.A. immediately. I never believed all that of course but I did grow to dislike the movement after learning about men like Joseph Stalin, and Lavrentiy Beria so when it came to meeting my U.S. history teacher I was very surprised to hear that she was a communist. Here was a woman who fought for what was right and goes out of her way everyday to make sure that every student gets what they need and challenges the authority who neglects and (many times) abuses the students' rights. This woman led me to the place that I volunteer with now and later led me to my first communist dinner.

I had no expectations going into the dinner. I had met many of the people organizing the event just the day before and they all were incredibly welcoming. Setting up for the dinner was fun as I got to know more of the people I was helping. Once people started to trickle in I got to see the nice community that has been made in that small building in Brooklyn. The hugs were only matched by the smiles people gave one another. Everyone seemed to know everyone and I was introduced to many great people who talked with me about college and how they came to be involved with the movement. As we ate the amazing food that was prepared for us, we heard fantastic speeches from the organizers explaining the importance of the Party. After, came the main event of the night, the auction, in which all proceeds go to preparing for the big event of the year "May Day" or "International Workers Day," a massive show of force by workers all over the planet. The auction was filled with an insane amount of content, ranging from a communist history walk tour to posters made by the organizers celebrating community and working together. By the end of the event hundreds of dollars were raised and while I myself am not a communist, I believe that the community work that they are doing is absolutely critical in making sure we have a better tomorrow.

★★★★★

¡HUELGA! luchar contra los recortes fascistas y la guerra capitalista

Continued from page 1

Cutbacks, low wages part of war prep

As the inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S., Russia, and China reaches new heights, the bosses are hoarding resources and superexploiting workers in preparation for recruiting us into their mounting wars. Universities play a complex role in this preparation. While their workers and facilities absorb the cutbacks that go hand-in-hand with resource hoarding, universities are also key sites for recruiting and training students to become a pacified workforce and the liberal misleaders of tomorrow.

The bosses need masses of people won to liberal ideas in college to reproduce the nationalism and helplessness that supports conditions of war. At Rutgers, diversity projects like the Honors Living and Learning College train students to believe in their individual exceptionalism, convincing them that a few Black students getting elite career opportunities will help liberate the entire Black working class. In the program, students get a minor in Social Justice, but only very few have participated in the strike effort, while even more have spent their time creating a Black Professionals Network. But no amount of politicians of color can change the material conditions for the international working class; only communist revolution led by PLP will smash capitalism's racist exploitation once and for all.

Bosses like Phil Murphy, Ras Baraka and Jonathan Holloway will show their true colors as liberal supporters of finance capital as they try to crush worker's unions in the coming days or betray workers in years to come when they run for greater seats of power. Governor Murphy, a former hedge fund executive at Goldman Sachs— the second largest investment bank in the world— will demand sacrifice from workers and will use increasingly fascist tactics to end the strike. Rutgers president Holloway will do whatever his real bosses–finance capital–dictate to keep pumping out obedient workers, generate profit for the state and pay Rutgers' external debt, which totals more than $250 million, including about $140 million to construct athletic facilities (USA Today 1/19/2022).

As the Rutgers strike continues, it will be imperative for workers and students to use it as a school for communism. Only on the picket lines will they learn the important lessons for liberation, and the tools to refuse the bosses' austerity without being won to liberal ideas that lead to imperialist war. With multiracial unity and an international Progressive Labor Party on the front lines, the Rutgers strike will help teach us all to have confidence in each other, and to embrace communism as our class's only way to win the world.

Future issues of CHALLENGE will contain further analysis and reports of our involvement in this strike.✪

GLOSSARY

COMMUNIST TERMS

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Paul Robeson, a beloved communist

Continued on page 7

had been semi-serfs - their cultural expression forbidden, their rich heritage almost lost under tsarist oppression's heel?

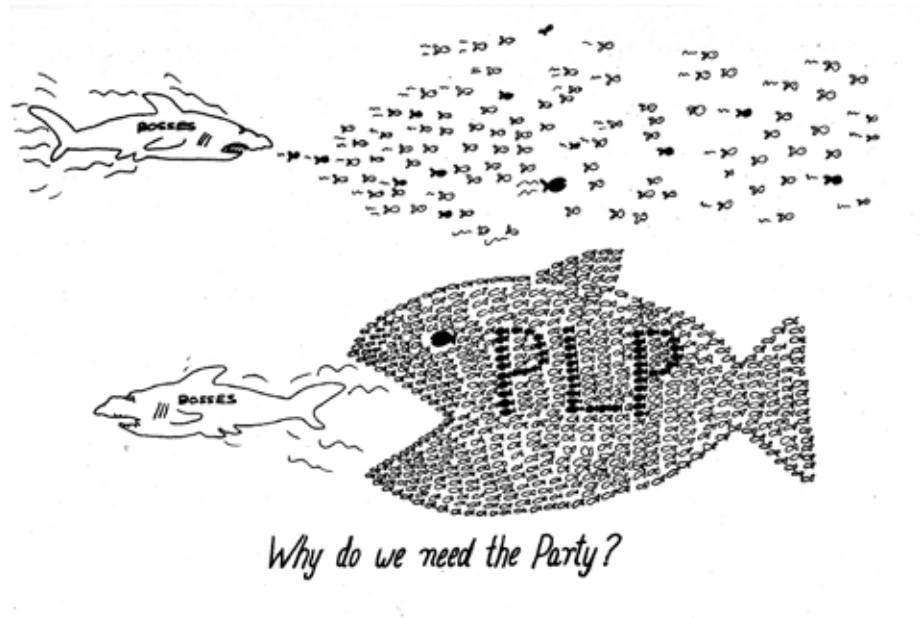
So here one witnessed in the field of the arts - a culture national in form, socialist in content. Here was a people quite comparable to some of the tribal folk of Asia - quite comparable to the proud Yoruba or Basuto of West and East Africa, but now their lives flowering anew within the socialist way of life twenty years matured under the guidance of Lenin and Stalin. And in this whole area of development of national minorities - of their relation to the Great Russians - Stalin had played and was playing a most decisive role.

I was later to travel - to see with my own eyes what could happen to so-called backward peoples. In the West (in England, in Belgium, France, Portugal, Holland) - the Africans, the Indians (East and West), many of the Asian peoples were considered so backward that centuries, perhaps, would have to pass before these so-called "colonials" could become a part of modern society.

But in the Soviet Union, Yakuts, Nenetses, Kirgiz, Tadzhiks - had respect and were helped to advance with unbelievable rapidity in this socialist land. No empty promises, such as colored folk continuously hear in the United States, but deeds. For example, the transforming of the desert in Uzbekistan into blooming acres of cotton. And an old friend of mine, Mr. Golden, trained under Carver at Tuskegee, played a prominent role in cotton production. In 1949, I saw his daughter, now grown and in the university - a proud Soviet citizen.

Today in Korea - in Southeast Asia - in Latin America and the West Indies, in the Middle East - in Africa, one sees tens of millions of long oppressed colonial peoples surging toward freedom. What courage - what sacrifice - what determination never to rest until victory!

And arrayed against them, the combined powers of the so-called Free West, headed by the greedy, profit-hungry, war-minded industrialists and financial barons of our America. The illusion of an "American Century" blinds them for the immediate present to the clear fact that civilization has passed them by - that we now live in a people's century - that the star shines brightly in the East of Europe and of the world. Colonial peoples today look to the Soviet Socialist Republics. They see how under the great Stalin millions like themselves have found a new life. They see that aided and guided by the example of the Soviet Union, led by their Mao Tse-tung, a new China adds its mighty power to the true and expanding socialist way of life. They see formerly semi-colonial Eastern European nations building new People's Democracies, based upon the people's power with the people shaping their own destinies. So much of this progress stems from the magnificent leadership, theoretical and practical, given by their friend Joseph Stalin.



They have sung - sing now and will sing his praise - in song and story. Slava - slava - slava - Stalin, Glory to Stalin. Forever will his name be honored and beloved in all lands.

In all spheres of modern life the influence of Stalin reaches wide and deep. From his last simply written but vastly discerning and comprehensive document, back through the years, his contributions to the science of our world society remain invaluable. One reverently speaks of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin - the shapers of humanity's richest present and future.

Yes, through his deep humanity, by his wise understanding, he leaves us a rich and monumental heritage. Most importantly - he has charted the direction of our present and future struggles. He has pointed the way to peace - to friendly co-existence - to the exchange of mutual scientific and cultural contributions - to the end of war and destruction. How consistently, how patiently, he labored for peace and ever increasing abundance, with what deep kindliness and wisdom. He leaves tens of millions all over the earth bowed in heart-aching grief.

But, as he well knew, the struggle continues. So, inspired by his noble example, let us lift our heads slowly but proudly high and march forward in the fight for peace - for a rich and rewarding life for all.

In the inspired words of Lewis Allan, our progressive lyricist -

To you Beloved Comrade, we make this solemn vow

The fight will go on - the fight will still go on.

Sleep well, Beloved Comrade, our work will just begin.

The fight will go on - till we win - until we win.

Paul Robeson's letter "To you Beloved Comrade" was taken from *Notes from Paul Robeson* (April 1953*)* https://www.northstarcompass.org/nsc9804/robeson.htm✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Fascism in Israel reaches new level

Al Jazeera, 4/7–The state of Israel is committing unchecked barbarism against Palestinians and the Western corporate media has decided it all comes down to "clashes." The latest round of so-called "clashes" – sparked when Israeli police decided to mark the Muslim holy month of Ramadan by repeatedly attacking Palestinian worshippers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque – has produced predictably disproportionate casualties. Hundreds of Palestinians have been arrested and wounded as Israeli forces have once again flaunted their handiness with rubber bullets, batons, stun grenades and tear gas. In return, the police have suffered minimal injuries, while also undertaking to accompany illegal Israeli settlers into the mosque compound… Israel has also launched a barrage of air strikes on the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon following reported rocket fire.

War in Eastern Africa foreshadows what is to come

Der Spiegel, 4/5–A so-called "permanent cessation of hostilities" has been holding in northern Ethiopia since November. The deal was hammered out in the South African capital of Pretoria in tough negotiations between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which heads the state government. It marked the end to what is likely the most brutal war the world has seen in recent years. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent his army into Tigray in November 2020 after a conflict over the distribution of power had erupted in the country…He received support from neighboring Eritrea. Hundreds of thousands of people died in the ensuing war, including up to 380,000 civilians, according to a group of researchers at the University of Gent in Belgium…The chief of staff of the Ethiopian army (ENDF) recently said that his forces lost 254,000 troops in the fighting. The Tigray military (TDF) has remained silent about the overall number of casualties it sustained.

KKkop murders of Black men continues

Newsone, 4/6–The centuries-old American tradition of Black men killed by police suffered an untraditional jolt when former cop Derek Chauvin was found guilty and convicted on all counts for murdering George Floyd…But if anybody thought police would be deterred by that apparent exception to the rule of holding police accountable for killing Black people, they should think again as it has been a quick resumption of law enforcement normalcy with continued shootings of Black men and boys with impunity since Chauvin's murder conviction. Dalaneo Martin, a 17-year-old Black teen, was killed last month by U.S. Park Police in Washington, D.C. after the teenager was found sleeping in a vehicle police say was stolen.

One of the most distressing parts of this seemingly nonstop string of police killings of Black people is the fact that more times than not, the officer involved in the shooting can hide behind the claim that they feared for their lives — even if the victim was shot in the back, as has become the case for so many deadly episodes involving law enforcement.

German workers fight back against bosses' wartime fascism

BBC, 3/27–Germany's transport network was at a near standstill as the country experienced one of its largest strikes in decades. Staff at airports, ports, railways, buses and subways walked out shortly after midnight for a 24-hour stoppage. Two of Germany's largest unions are demanding higher wages to help with the rising cost of living."Many public service workers are suffering from high energy prices and high inflation,"...Monday's "mega strike", as it has been dubbed in local media, has affected commuter and regional trains operated by Deutsche Bahn, Germany's national rail operator… In an interview with the German newspaper Bild, the chief of Verdi, Frank Werneke, described the pay rise as "a matter of survival for many thousands of employees. The people are not only underpaid, they are hopelessly overworked," he said.

Paul Robeson, a beloved communist

Paul Robeson, world-famous actor, singer, and fighter against racism and for communism, was born 125 years ago today, in Princeton, New Jersey.

Many are celebrating Robeson's birthday. But very few of them mention that Roberson was a communist. Only the anticommunists say it (e.g. the Washington Post, February 19, 2019).

In fact, Robeson was a "Stalinist" -- an admirer of Joseph Stalin as the leader of the worldwide communist movement and of the Soviet Union, where racism was outlawed.

Stalin was the last Soviet leader who insisted that socialism (as it was then understood) must steadily advance towards communism. He was working towards that goal after World War II. The Soviet advance towards communism was ended under Stalin's dishonest successor, Nikita Khrushchev, and Khrushchev's successors. The last of these successors, Mikhail Gorbachev, paved the war for the restoration of full-blown capitalism in 1991.

Immediately after Stalin died, on March 5, 1953, Robeson wrote this tribute to him. These last lines, quoted from another author, make it clear that Robeson looked forward to communism:

To You Beloved Comrade by Paul Robeson

To you Beloved Comrade,
we make this solemn vow
The fight will go on - t
The fight will still go on.
Sleep well, Beloved Comrade,
our work will just begin.
The fight will go on -
till we win - until we win.

* * * * *

There is no richer store of human experience than the folk tales, folk poems and songs of a people. In many, the heroes are always fully recognizable humans - only larger and more embracing in dimension. So it is with Russian, Chinese, and African folk-lore.

In 1937, a highly expectant audience of Moscow citizens - workers, artists, youth, farmers from surrounding towns - crowded the Bolshoi Theater. They awaited a performance by the Uzbek National Theater, headed by the highly gifted Tamara Khanum. The orchestra was a large one with instruments, ancient and modern. How exciting would be the blending of the music of the rich culture of Moussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Khrennikov, Gliere - with that of the beautiful music of the Uzbeks, stemming from an old and proud civilization.

Suddenly everyone stood - began to applaud - to cheer - and to smile. The children waved.

In a box to the right - smiling and applauding the audience - as well as the artists on the stage - stood the great Stalin.

I remember the tears began to quietly flow. and I too smiled and waved. Here was clearly a man who seemed to embrace all. So kindly - I can never forget that warm feeling of kindliness and also a feeling of sureness. Here was one who was wise and good - the world and especially the socialist world was fortunate indeed to have his daily guidance. I lifted high my son Pauli to wave to this world leader, and his leader. For Paul, Jr. had entered school in Moscow, in the land of the Soviets.

The wonderful performance began, unfolding new delights at every turn - ensemble and individual, vocal and orchestral, classic and folk-dancing of amazing originality. Could it be possible that a few years before in 1900 - in 1915 - these people

Continued on page 7

March with us on May Day '23

★BROOKLYN, NY: April 29 at 12 PM
Clarendon Rd and Flatbush Ave
★ CHICAGO, IL: MAY 6 at 12 PM
Broadway and Wilson Intersection
★ LOS ANGELES, CA: April 29 at 2PM to 6 PM
Jazz Park: 4222 S. Central Ave

NEXT DEADLINE

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is the

Friday night of April 21

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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